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ABSTRACT

The Currie Report, or the Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand, which appeared in 1962, has been generating changes on a broad front within the New Zealand educational system throughout the last ten years. Eight areas of concern were identified by that Commission. The "most clamant" was the recruitment and training of teachers. Second was the need for improvements in teachers' conditions of service. Third, the Commission sought ways of further involving laymen in the control and management of schools by restructuring administration at the district level. Maori education was the fourth area of concern. Fifth, the Commission wished to see instituted some regular system of national assessment in the basic subjects along with a system of checks at certain points in children's progress throughout the system. Suggestions for a reorganization of the school system grew out of an examination of the sixth area of concern, while the seventh centered on obtaining a sounder legal basis for the admission of voluntary religious teachers into the schools and for daily religious observances. Finally, the Commission examined the important question of State aid to private schools. This report reviews the achievements of the last ten years. (Author/WM)

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THE CURRIE REPORT: TEN YEARS LATER

by John L. Ewing

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Introduction

TEN YEARS have passed since the *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (better known as the Currie Report after the chairman, Sir George Currie) appeared as a document running to over eight hundred pages and containing more than three hundred recommendations.

It is well-known that a number of the Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Government and became realities in a comparatively short time. One thinks of longer training for teachers and curriculum change. There was indeed, after 1962, a period of dramatic activity. But what about the many other recommendations? Were they put into cold storage or in pigeon-holes? Did the Report quietly die? It may be noted that these questions are also being asked about the Newsom and Plowden reports. It seems to be the fate of the findings of special inquiries into education to enjoy a brief, exhilarating period in the spotlight of publicity and action—and then to drop out of sight.

This Report was a full-length study and critique of the education system, and it must also be seen as the most comprehensive exercise in educational planning so far undertaken in New Zealand—if one excepts Charles Bowen's proposals for a national system of primary education on which the 1877 Education Act was based.

Like its notable predecessors, the Cohen Commission (1912) and the Atmore Committee (1930), the Currie Commission had its origin in dissatisfaction in the community with some features of school work, combined with the desire for changes in the education system which has manifested itself each thirty or forty years since 1877. The crisis in the supply of teachers that had dogged the 1950s was a continuing source of worry in fast-growing urban schools and in some country districts. Teaching methods in primary schools had come under criticism; parents and numbers of teachers were uneasy about approaches and class organisation that aimed to take account of the varying intellectual abilities of children in a typical class. Even after nearly a generation's experience, secondary education for all was producing problems in both schools and homes. Also tendencies to delinquency were causing some concern. It seemed timely to make a

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full-scale survey of the system, its organisation, the training of teachers, and the work of the schools.

Terms of reference

The eleven members of the Commission* were asked, in February 1960, to examine primary, secondary, and technical education 'in relation to the present and future needs of the country'. This task was spelt out in nine specific items ranging from curricula, through the pre-service training and conditions of service of teachers, to child welfare and delinquency. A tenth topic, the question of financial aid from the Government to private schools, was also included. Unlike the Atmore

* The Commission comprised: Sir George Currie, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of New Zealand (*Chairman*), Mr J. W. Armstrong, Professor C. L. Bailey, Mr G. F. Bartley, Mr G. T. Bolt, Mr J. L. Cameron, Mrs M. E. MacKenzie, Mr R. W. Cumberworth, Mr R. T. Davis, Mr D. F. Horlor, and Miss M. W. May.

Committee, the Commission did not inquire into university education, because in 1959 the Parry Committee had recommended sweeping and conspicuous changes in the universities; nor was it expected to examine pre-school education, which strictly speaking lies outside the formal school system. However, in view of the growing relationship between pre-school and primary education, the Commission felt bound to receive some evidence from pre-school organisations and to make recommendations.

'Areas of concern'

After hearing more than five hundred submissions and making enquiries overseas, the members of the Commission were able to agree on what they considered to be the most serious problems in the system. Eight 'areas of concern' were identified, and to them the Commission naturally gave special attention. They are mentioned briefly here and will be dealt with more fully later on. First and 'most clamant' of all was the recruitment and training of teachers (including in-service training) on which in large measure the quality of the work of the schools depends. Next was the need for improvements in teachers' conditions of service, including the idea that the teaching service should be systematically revalued. Third, the Commission sought ways of further involving laymen in the control and management of schools by restructuring administration at the district level: behind the proposals made on this topic was the expectation that they would help to improve communication between professional educators and the public, and vice versa. Maori education was the fourth area of concern; the Commission believed that further special measures were necessary in order that 'equality of opportunity becomes in every sense a reality for both races'. Fifth, in considering the quality of school work, the Commission wished to see instituted some regular system of national assessment in the basic subjects along with a system of checks at certain points in children's progress through the system. Suggestions for a re-organisation of the school system grew out of an examination of the sixth area of concern. The seventh centred on obtaining a sounder legal basis for the admission of voluntary religious teachers into the schools and for daily religious observances than was contained in the then prevailing 'Nelson system'. Finally, there was the important and thorny question of State aid to private schools. The Commission also looked beyond these major topics and recommended changes in other parts of the system.

Four broad trends

An important point about the Commission's findings is that they were unanimous. No minority report appeared, nor was any basic disagreement evident with the four broad trends affecting changes in the national system put before the Commission by the then Director of Education, Mr A. E. Campbell. The trends were summarised as follows:

(a) an effort to provide equality of educational opportunity in the full sense of the idea;

(b) an effort to give pupils at all stages a richer and better balanced education than they have had in the past;

(c) an effort to improve personal relationships in the classroom and and to relate the business of schooling more closely to modern knowledge of the nature and needs of children and adolescents;

(d) an effort to seize the educational opportunities and to meet the educational demands of our own changing society and the changing world.

These trends, as Mr Campbell pointed out, were characteristic of modern education throughout a great part of the world. The Commission was, however, critical of lack of communication between the Department of Education and parents and between the Department and teachers about new teaching methods and their implications; and the Report put some emphasis on 'the primary intellectual aim of schooling'. But there were no irreconcilable differences between the recommendations and the general purposes of the national system.

A turning-point

The Commission can be regarded as a turning-point between two periods of about twelve years: the 1950s and early 1960s, when critical shortages of staff slowed up the natural growth of the system towards better training of teachers, smaller classes, curriculum change, and the expansion of many services; and the later 1960s and early 1970s when more favourable conditions and the impetus given by the Report not only made many of these reforms feasible, but also opened the way to more detailed studies of specific topics, such as the training programme in the teachers' colleges, the control of the teachers' colleges, pre-school education, relationships between the technical institutes and the universities, educational television, and guidance counselling.

As will be seen, the Commission made an attempt to relate the costs of its recommendations, in the broadest way, to the national economy. Neither of its predecessors had done this. On the other hand, there was nothing in the Report that could be regarded as a cost-benefit analysis. The Commission, of course, was not asked to make a detailed cost study of its plans for change. If it had, it would have included at least one economist. The National Development Conference of 1968 expanded the concept of planning so that major projects for educational change are now seen against a broader economic background than in the past.

Influences from overseas

Changes taking place overseas affected the thinking of the Commission on some issues. For example, the proposal that institutes of education be set up to draw universities and teachers' colleges closer together was an attempt to translate into New Zealand a type of organisation that had been operating with some success in England. The recommendation that resulted in the establishment in the Department of Education of a Curriculum Development Unit was undoubtedly influenced by the creation in the Ministry of Education in England early in 1962 of a Curriculum Study Group which two years later became the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations. The Commission's strong support of developments in senior technical work was also clearly affected by what was happening outside New Zealand, and the same would apply to the proposal to raise the school-leaving age.

The recommendations fell into three broad groups. First, there were those that advocated a re-arrangement of parts of the system. The re-organisation of education districts to provide District Education Councils is the best example of this kind of recommendation; another was the idea, mentioned above, of setting up institutes of education in New Zealand; and a third was the plan to begin secondary education at Form 1. Also in this first group were proposals for major re-organisation within the Department of Education, such as the appointment of a group of officers with responsibilities towards the curriculum from infant classes to Form 6* and the setting up of a research and planning unit. The second group contained recommendations which supported

*Now Form 7: hereafter this translation will be made for convenience of reference.

changes already initiated or being planned. The Commission's strong endorsement of the moves to establish Form 1-7 schools in country districts is a good example here. Another was its concurrence with the idea of separating technical and secondary education. The third group, by far the most numerous, suggested expansions or modifications of services already established. The great majority of recommendations in this group have been put into effect.

Processing the recommendations

What arrangements were made for processing the Commission's recommendations? They were, of course, discussed in detail in the Department of Education and by the groups that make up the education community. A senior officer of the Department worked with the Director-General in co-ordinating submissions to be made to the Minister of Education. The Minister* was closely interested in the Commission's findings, and the Government set up a special sub-committee of Cabinet to study major proposals in the Report, consider the cost involved, and make recommendations to the Government. As changes in teacher training had high priority, the Minister agreed to the setting up of a National Advisory Council on the Training of Teachers (as the Commission had recommended) to advise him and the Director-General on the steps to be taken to improve teacher training. Furthermore, the Commission's recommendations as a whole have been reviewed periodically in the Department with the help of an index of recommendations containing details of whatever action has been taken on each one. The latest review was in 1971.

What has come of it all? The following pages try to answer this question. First, the Commission's plans for each of the areas of concern are looked at in some detail, and then its recommendations for other parts of the system examined.

* The Commission had been set up by the Hon. P. O. S. Skoglund, but at the time of the publication of its Report, he had been succeeded as Minister of Education by the Hon. W. Blair Tennent.

First Area of Concern

The Training of Teachers

> *'Altogether it has appeared to the Commission, on the basis both of the evidence it received and of its own investigations that it is in the field of teacher training, more perhaps than in any other section of the education system, that the greatest improvements will have to be effected in the next decade.' (Report, p. 487.)*

THE COMMISSION formulated its plans for the future of teacher training in New Zealand in 45 recommendations. Behind the planning were principles which can be stated as follows:

the teachers' colleges should have the standing of tertiary institutions

the universities should have more responsibility for the training of teachers

the course of training for primary teachers should be extended with consequential upgrading of facilities and conditions of service of staff

efforts should be made to improve the quality of entrants to training and the quality of the training itself

the training of secondary teachers should be improved

provisions for in-service training should be extended.

The Commission was aware that much hard thinking about its proposals would have to be done and crucial decisions made. Thus its first recommendation was for the establishment of a representative National Advisory Council on the Training of Teachers. The Council was quickly set up, not however as a statutory body as the Commission had desired. The Department of Education, the universities, teachers, the teachers' colleges, and employing authorities were represented on it; an independent chairman, C. C. Aikman, Professor of Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law at Victoria University of Wellington, was

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Science in the intermediate school. Through simple experiments and observations the pupils seek patterns which may lead to scientific generalisations.

appointed. It became, as the Commission had envisaged, the channel by which the recommendations on teacher training, after close scrutiny, discussion, and—if considered necessary—amendment reached the Minister of Education. By him they were taken to the special sub-committee of Cabinet already mentioned. The Council immediately endorsed the principle of extended training for primary teachers.

The first problem was how to introduce the longer course. The Commission's plan was to make a beginning in 1966 with part of the intake of trainees, and to complete the change ten years later. The Council argued for a speedier change-over. In its first report to the Minister of Education, published in 1964 under the title *Introducing the Three Year Course*, it proposed that the change to three-year training begin in two teachers' colleges and that it be continued by bringing in two further colleges each year. These proposals were adopted by the Government and the transfer to longer training was completed in 1969.

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The Council's second report included proposals, in broad outline, for the content of the three-year course. They were the result of considerable discussion and of the study of current training programmes in England and the U.S. It was suggested that the extended course be in three parts—English, professional studies (education, the curriculum, and teaching practice) designed to deepen students' professional knowledge and skill as teachers, and certain other subjects selected by the students and studied in depth—mainly in order to further their own general education. The Council's proposals were adopted, and within the three-part structure all the colleges mapped out detailed courses. Later on, mathematics became a compulsory subject, as the Commission had recommended.

Other proposals of the Commission, aimed at improving the quality of the work of the colleges, were also endorsed by the Council and accepted by the Government. The minimum academic qualification for training as a primary teacher was raised, and students entering training

Modern school design calls for flexibility—both in the use of space and in the organisation of groups and classes.

with a university entrance qualification were given an extra salary increment. A new scheme for full-time university studentships was introduced. Also, the staffing ratio in the colleges was improved, and the staffing structure broadened to include principal lecturers—a borrowing from England—while the position of junior lecturer, long regarded as unsatisfactory, was abolished. A scheme for paying associate teachers was instituted. The emergency one-year course for older entrants, begun during the acute shortage of teachers after the Second World War—the 'pressure-cooker' course as it was familiarly known—was discontinued as the supply of entrants improved. The possibility of making U.E. the basic requirement for primary training was debated from time to time, but until recently the proportion of entrants with this qualification remained comparatively low. In 1971, however, it was 70.3 percent (1970:59.4 percent) and in 1972 the comparable figure was 79.6 percent.* The question of raising the minimum qualification to what it was in the 1920s will undoubtedly be renewed.

The role of the universities

One of the strengths of teacher training in New Zealand has long been the arrangements for concurrent college and university studies. This was a Scottish tradition that came to New Zealand by way of Otago in the 1870s and is now firmly accepted as part of the training of selected students. The Commission, in furtherance of its desire to strengthen the existing relationship of the colleges and the universities, advocated the setting up of institutes of education on the English model. This was a closer and more formal relationship than had previously obtained, and it implied the transfer of responsibility for the training of teachers from the Department of Education to the universities. The proposal is set out in detail on pages 500-511 of the Report, but it did not receive general support, probably for two main reasons. In the first place, most of the universities would have been formally associated with only one teachers' college, and this relationship did not seem to justify the full institute structure. Secondly, changes in the control of the teachers' colleges flowing from the National Advisory Committee's third report pointed to other ways of giving the universities a larger role in teacher training.

*In 1972, the proportion of men with university entrance entering training as primary teachers was 81.8 percent.

Since 1877, the colleges had remained under the administrative control of the education boards, although in 1905 George Hogben managed to centralise control of the general framework of the training programme. The National Advisory Council, confirming the Commission's view that the teachers' colleges should be regarded as tertiary institutions in every way, advocated the setting up of a teachers' college council as the governing body for the college or colleges in each district and the inclusion among its members of representatives of local employing authorities, the Department of Education, the university of the district, the staff of the college, the teachers' organisations, the principal of the college and one or two additional members appointed by the Minister of Education. Such councils are now functioning in all districts. They have wide powers—including responsibility for the detailed college programme, the appointment of staff, and the general management of the colleges. Each Council now issues its own certificate to students who satisfactorily complete the training course.* The Advisory Council's recommendation that the college staffs be represented on the College Councils has not as yet been accepted. Each Council has responsible to it an academic committee on which both the university and the teachers' college are represented, and there are also subject committees bringing together in formal association subject teachers both from the colleges and from the relevant departments of the universities. The alliance of universities and teachers' colleges has now become so firmly established that new colleges authorised in the future will of necessity, as the Advisory Council recommended, be built in close proximity to a university. An outcome of this has been an increase in the size of some existing colleges.

Within the new framework, various forms of association between the colleges and the universities are developing. They range from a course for an undergraduate Diploma in Education at the University of Otago, partly taught by college staff accredited as university teachers, to New Zealand's first university school of education established at the University of Waikato in association with Hamilton Teachers' College. Furthermore, the Victoria University of Wellington recently agreed to grant to students who complete with credit the training course at Wellington Teachers' College two unspecified units towards an arts degree; while a

* The Department of Education still registers teachers who have satisfactorily completed both their college training and practical teaching requirements, and also issues the Trained Teacher's Certificate and the Diploma in Teaching.

course leading to a Bachelor of Education as a first degree has been introduced at Massey University. There are obviously further changes ahead.

The training of secondary teachers

The Commission did not propose large-scale changes in the training of secondary teachers, but discussions on secondary training once begun opened up prospects of more fundamental changes, including training within the university. In 1967, the National Advisory Council, in a lengthy memorandum reviewing the growth of the training of secondary teachers in New Zealand, invited each university to submit a proposal for a university-based training scheme. Several such schemes have been submitted to the Department of Education. It is clear that the preparation of secondary teachers is of necessity changing to meet the changing needs of the pupils and of the community in which they live.

In-service training

The Commission urged that in-service training be extended in order to give special attention to the professional needs of young teachers. Among outcomes were some help for teachers with the cost of travel to local in-service courses, and in 1971 the opening of a second in-service centre, Hogben House, in Christchurch as a complement to Lopdell House in Auckland and also to the Wallis House courses in Wellington. Advisory services to teachers were strengthened by recruiting, as the Commission had suggested, advisers of more experience than had been the practice in the past.

It is no exaggeration to say that the findings of the Currie Commission initiated the most far-reaching, comprehensive, and discerning changes in teacher training in New Zealand since the national system was introduced in 1877. Practically all the 45 recommendations have been accepted and adopted either in full or in some modified form. It is worth noting, too, that the Report is still generating new ideas on teacher training, especially on the training of secondary teachers. Its Chapter Eleven has been a noteworthy contribution to planning in education. To the historian, the findings themselves and what they led to will be an excellent case study in educational change. It may be added that the changes in teacher training recorded here depended on the whole-hearted support of the Commission's findings by the education community.

Second Area of Concern

The Status and Quality of the Teaching Profession

> *'The individual teacher doing a conscientious and skilful job is the best, and indeed the only, guarantee of the retention of professional status.' (P. 569.)*

IN 36 recommendations, the Currie Commission summed up its views on ways in which teaching as a profession could be improved. The general discussion of the topic fell into four main parts—the status of teaching, recruitment, salaries, and conditions of service.

The Commission was in no doubt about the responsible task assigned to teachers, nor about their special and singular claim to high professional status. To quote the Report: 'To teachers are entrusted the formation and development of what are acknowledged to be a nation's most valuable resources, the young people who will later be its adult citizens.' The status of a profession rests on a number of criteria: the the quality and length of the training required for entry to it; the extent to which members share in decision-making that affects the profession as a whole, particularly decisions that bear on professional standards; and the scope the members feel they have to use initiative.

The priority given by the Commission to revised and extended training for teachers speaks for itself in this context. The Report also noted with approval the steadily growing association of the teaching body 'with the task of raising, and improving education generally' by participating in curriculum revision and by acting as interpreters of educational practice to parents and to the general public. This process has steadily increased over the past decade. The spread of in-service training and the strengthening of home and school relationships are among the outcomes. Direct representation of teachers on the committees responsible for recommending appointments of primary teachers, and a full share by teachers in shaping policy changes in the appointments scheme were merely getting under way when the Commission sat. The Report endorsed these changes.

Since 1962, substantial moves towards eliminating unnecessary assessment of teachers have opened the way for more initiative and innovation in the schools. One recommendation that has remained dormant is that, in the appointment of primary teachers, higher priority be given to academic qualifications.

It should be kept in mind that when the Commission was sitting both primary and secondary schools were seriously short of staff. This fact dominated educational discussion at the time. Indeed the Commission was asked 'as a matter of urgent public interest' to produce an interim report on secondary school staffing and recruitment. This it did in 1960, making 18 recommendations for improvements; and it returned to the topic in its final report. Every conceivable way of recruiting more teachers was canvassed. The Commission strongly supported recruitment campaigns overseas, including attempts to attract back expatriate New Zealand teachers. It urged that a recruitment officer be stationed in London for at least two years. These recommendations were adopted and bore fruit. Since 1962, over eleven hundred well-qualified English teachers have taken up positions in New Zealand schools. In 1971, overseas recruitment for teachers of mathematics and science was extended with success to the United States. At the same time, internal recruitment made headway as the number of candidates for teaching improved: in 1972 the total number of applicants, particularly those for the primary service, far exceeded the quotas authorised.

Salaries and conditions

On the question of teachers' salaries, the Commission made a number of recommendations, some of them suggesting changes in existing scales—as for example an increase in the number of senior positions in the psychological service, and this has become effective. But the members of the Commission had in mind the broader idea of a major review of salaries. Thus their basic recommendation asked for the setting up of a seven-man Standing Advisory Committee 'to make full investigations and recommendations for the initial review of the salaries of teachers and later to keep them under regular review'. What was envisaged was a committee similar to the Coleraine Committee responsible for advising the British Government on changes it believes desirable in salaries for those in the higher civil service. The recommendation was not adopted, but an Advisory Committee on Higher Salaries, established on the recommendation of the Royal Commission

on the State Service, was asked to fix salaries for the top positions in the primary, secondary, and technical services. All other salaries were then to be the subject of normal negotiations. In 1969, a statutory body, the Education Service Committee, to be chaired by the Director-General of Education or his nominee, was set up under the State Services Remuneration and Conditions of Service Act to conduct negotiations with the teaching bodies. From these negotiations came in 1970 a revaluation of the salaries of primary and secondary teachers and, in 1971, salary increases for technical staff.

Other recommendations in this section of the Report were aimed at improving conditions in the schools. One of them produced alterations in the staffing entitlement of some schools to provide an additional teacher so that the head teacher could fully exercise his supervisory role; another led to the acceptance of the principle of employing part-time teachers in primary schools with particular staffing difficulties; and the Commission's support was instrumental in making clerical assistance available to more schools. The Commission also urged that more teachers be given leave for full-time study at a university, and the number of these awards has since been increased.

Highly relevant to this area of concern was the Commission's advocacy of smaller classes in both primary and secondary schools. For primary and intermediate schools where classes 'are too large and have been so for a long time' the Commission recommended an immediate change in maximum class size to 40 pupils, with an ultimate maximum of 35; infant classes should not be above 30 pupils, and in one-teacher schools a maximum of 25 pupils was recommended. The principle of progressive reduction to a 1:35 ratio was agreed to by the Government, and the introduction into both primary and intermediate schools of 1:35 staffing schedules between 1972 and 1976 has been sanctioned and is under way. In secondary schools, the Commission proposed that sixth forms be limited to 20 pupils and for other classes there should be a progressive reduction to a maximum of 30 pupils. The Government in 1968 agreed to a step by step reduction 'as circumstances permit', so that by and large no Form 6 or Form 7 class would have more than 20 pupils, and no other class more than 30. Good progress has been made, and more than 650 additional teachers have been appointed to the schools. The Commission's support of these important changes was undoubtedly a major factor in securing approval for them.

Third Area of Concern

The Administration of Education

> *'. . . there is . . . a point of view which the Commission is inclined to embrace that holds that, if administration is to be taut and responsive to changing opinion and changing need, a measure of tension is unavoidable. To prevent tension degenerating into conflict becomes, in this view, a main art of administration.' (P. 94.)*

OF THE 27 recommendations on this topic, half were devoted to major changes in the administrative structure at the district level. The remainder dealt with important but less spectacular innovations.

The Commission's proposals were put forward in the full knowledge of certain groups of problems inherent in the growth of our education system, which can be summarised as:

those arising from the use of central funds by district and local agencies;

those arising from the historical fact that the primary system works in three tiers (central, district, and local) and the secondary system in two tiers (central and local, with small exceptions);

those arising from the long-standing lack of co-ordination between the different parts of the system.

These, incidentally, were among the problems that had faced the Cohen Commission and the Atmore Committee. The Currie Commission's proposed re-organisation would, it was hoped, diminish their impact on the system and perhaps ultimately resolve them. At the same time, the Commission recognised very clearly that out of more than eighty years of experience of administering the education system in New Zealand there had emerged certain principles which could not be ignored in any re-planning; namely:

that local interest in education should be preserved and strengthened;

that central financing of education should continue;

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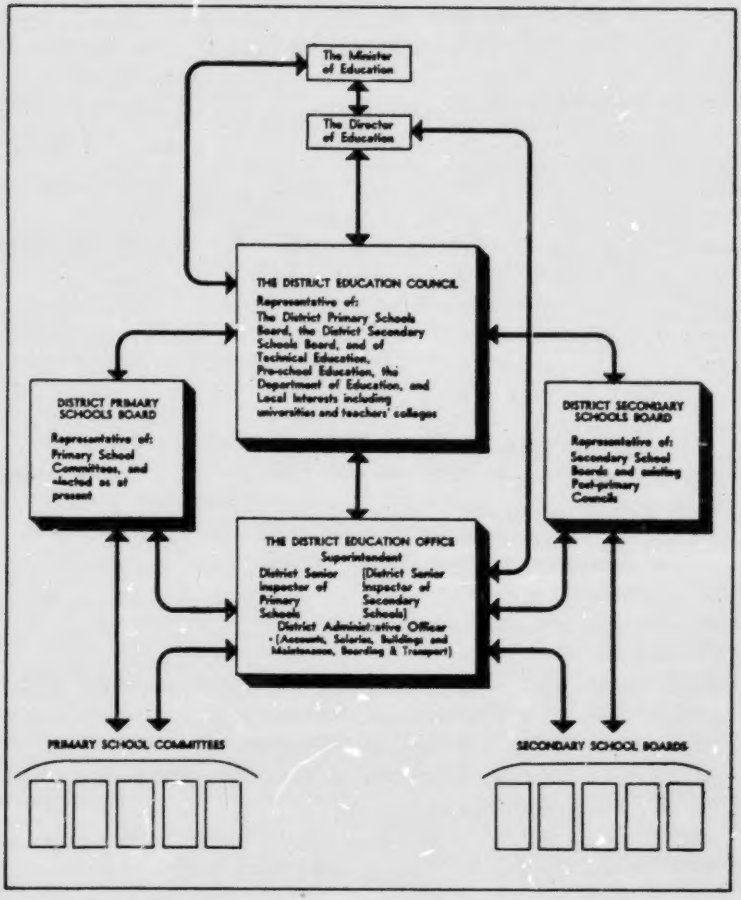
The Minister of Education
The Director of Education
THE DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Representative of:
The District Primary Schools Board, the District Secondary Schools Board, and of Technical Education, Pre-school Education, the Department of Education, and Local Interests including universities and teachers' colleges
DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS BOARD
Representative of:
Primary School Committees, and elected as at present
DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOLS BOARD
Representative of:
Secondary School Boards and existing Post-primary Councils
THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
Superintendent
District Senior Inspector of Primary Schools
District Senior Inspector of Secondary Schools
District Administrative Officer
(Accounts, Salaries, Buildings and Maintenance, Boarding & Transport)
PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMITTEES
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARDS

that a balance should be kept between local and central power;

that there should be as much delegation as possible to district and local institutions as is consistent with central financing.

The nature and details of the Commission's re-organisation of district administration can be readily understood from a study of the diagram above reproduced from the Report. The main component of the

new structure was to be the District Education Council, a body on which all educational interests were to be represented, with a chairman indepedent of the Department of Education. The Council's main functions would be to advise the Department of Education and the Minister of Education of the future educational needs of the district, and to investigate and comment on 'any matters relating to education in its district that it deemed fit'. It was to report annually to the Minister. The chief executive officer would be the District Superintendent, who would control the District Education Office. Like all other officers of the Council, he would be appointed by the State Services Commission. District secondary education boards to parallel the existing primary boards were to be established. One implication of the proposed change was the dissolution of the regional offices of the Department of Education.

Unenthusiastic response

Though the administrative changes advanced by the Commission were in many respects less radical than those advocated by the Cohen Commission and the Atmore Committee, they were received with little enthusiasm. The secondary school boards were opposed to a scheme which interposed a new body between them and the Department of Education; the education boards were lukewarm, and the Department had reservations. There was no strong public demand for change. On the face of it, the new administrative pattern seemed somewhat top-heavy. It was not clear what kind of decentralisation—financial or otherwise—would follow acceptance of the new plan, but it was evident that the Commission itself was unhappy about any large measure of decentralisation of professional responsibilities. One of the most contentious issues was the ambivalent position of the District Superintendent, who was to be appointed as a public servant and was also to be the chief executive officer of the District Education Council; the conflict of loyalties inherent in this situation was widely debated, and the proposal to staff the Council's office with public servants inevitably aroused fear of increasing centralisation. Meanwhile, in Wellington, the last of the Department's three regional offices was opened in 1963.

Finally, in 1966 a sub-committee of the Public Expenditure Committee made its own enquiries within the education service during Parliamentary recess, and found little support for, and some resistance to, the Commission's proposals. It recommended to the Government

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Among the significant developments of the last decade has been the increasing degree of independence given to senior students and the trend towards active discussion rather than passive listening.

that they be not proceeded with. And here the matter rests. This does not mean that planning for changes in the administration of education has ceased. It continues—as it must. Some parts of the Commission's planning will be re-examined as fresh proposals come forward. But one can be reasonably certain that when changes are made, they will not follow exactly the plan suggested by the Commission.

Recommendations accepted

Of the other administrative recommendations, one of the most significant and promising asked that an Education District Boundaries Commission be set up to establish criteria for the desirable size of education districts, and then to recommend relevant changes in education board boundaries. This recommendation was quickly adopted. The Education Act was amended and Mr G. N. Boulton, an experienced secretary-manager of an education board, appointed as Commissioner. He took evidence in various parts of the country and in 1964 submitted his report and recommendations. On his criteria, he

was able to recommend the subdivision of existing board districts to form new boards in Northland, the Bay of Plenty and in the South Canterbury-North Otago area; and some adjustments of board boundaries were also suggested, for example, the transfer of Marlborough from the Wellington Board to Nelson. The Public Expenditure Committee, in its report for 1967, saw merit in the Northland proposal, but was not prepared to recommend the others. Northland may ultimately become a separate board district as urban growth around Auckland increases the responsibilities of the Auckland Board.

Other recommendations suggested a variety of administrative improvements, most of which have been accepted. As an example, the proposal was readily adopted that a Standing Committee on Administration for secondary education be set up on the same lines as the committee for primary education, which had been functioning since 1958 and had already proved to be a workable point of balance on some administrative issues. The principle of head teachers' attending school committee meetings by legal right was also adopted and the same right extended to principals of secondary schools to attend meetings of their employing board. On the other hand, the suggestion that secondary school boards group themselves for administrative purposes has led to only one new secondary schools council—that at Nelson. While a second Assistant Director-General (Professional) in the Department of Education has not been appointed, as the Commission suggested, the new position of Superintendent of Special Services has partially fulfilled the recommendation. Enlargement of the public relations unit within the Department stemmed from a further recommendation.

The Commission's desire that some form of training in school administration be instituted for newly appointed head teachers and principals has been recognised by special in-service courses. A further recommendation, that training in educational administration at a university be considered, encouraged the introduction of a post-graduate course at Victoria University of Wellington, leading to a Diploma in Educational Administration.

Fourth Area of Concern

Maori Education

> *'If we are to make progress in this matter, two educational problems must be solved. The first is to determine how far the education offered the Maori in our schools is in fact the most suitable for his needs. The second is how best to enable the Maori to take advantage of the education that is offered, to the extent that this lies within the control of the education system.' (P. 415.)*

IN the social context of Maori life, three forces, each dynamic in its own way, can be discerned. They were noted by the Currie Commission and influenced its recommendations, but since then they have grown in strength. One is the steady increase in the number of Maoris. In the latest census, Maoris numbered 223,600 out of New Zealand's total population of 2,861,900; in other words, the proportion of Maoris in the population is about 8.4 percent. Estimates of the proportion by the end of the century are in the region of 15 percent. Along with population growth, the past twenty years has witnessed a persistent drift of Maoris from country to city. In 1951, over 80 percent of Maoris were country dwellers; today, the comparable figure is about 50 percent. Also, the 1960s saw a resurgence among Maoris of close interest in their own needs and values, in *Maoritanga*—'the Maori way of life'. These trends inevitably affect the schooling of many Maori pupils. The Commission, in 23 recommendations, set out its plan for improving Maori education as it functioned in the early 1960s.

The first recommendation was an attempt to end what had become an anomaly in the primary school system—the existence (since 1879) of a separate group of Maori schools. The recommendation envisaged the transfer of all Maori schools to the control of the education boards within a period of about ten years. Actually the last Maori schools were transferred within six years of the publication of the Report. This move was due in large measure to the support of the National

Advisory Committee on Maori Education set up in 1956. A fuller account of this change and of the historical background to Maori education is to be found in an earlier issue of *Education* (No. 4, 1971).

However, what could be termed the basic recommendation on Maori education has not been put into effect. It asked for the introduction of a scheme 'whereby any school with a sufficiently large number of Maori pupils may be declared a Maori Service school and as such qualify for special provision in staffing, etc.' Like the recommendation for the establishment of institutes of education as a means of improving the training of teachers, this one did not fit easily into our educational pattern and traditions. It was followed by a series of other recommendations which spelt out ways and means of helping and encouraging Maori pupils in their schooling. All of these latter proposals have been adopted, wholly or in a modified form. If the principle of a formal organisation of Maori Service schools has failed to gain acceptance, Maori children needing help have in practice received and are continuing to receive the kind of assistance the Commission recommended.

The Commission's proposals for immediate action entailed better staffing, more professional help for teachers in schools with a large proportion of Maoris, and the encouragement of Maori parents to take an active interest in their children's schooling. Within a few years, special staffing, including part-time help for remedial teaching, had been approved for schools with large Maori rolls. Supervision of these schools in each North Island district became the special responsibility of an inspector of schools. Another proposal, that the number of young Maori men and women accepted for entry to the teachers' colleges be increased as more qualified entrants presented themselves came into effect, and when certificated these teachers were encouraged, again on the suggestion of the Commission, to seek positions in schools of mixed race away from their home area.

To help teachers with their language programmes for Maori pupils, a group of advisers was appointed, and more recently a further adviser began work with teachers in the Otara area in Auckland. The visiting teacher scheme was extended to districts with large Maori populations, such as Tokoroa and Otara, and, as the number of guidance counsellors increases, this service is spreading more comprehensively to secondary schools with large Maori rolls. Among special publications were guides for teachers in language work, a handbook entitled *Maori Children and the Teacher*, a further handbook for teachers of

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English to Maori pupils, and recently a series of readers prepared especially for Maori children.

Education boards whose districts contained a large Maori population appointed, as recommended by the Commission, sub-committees on Maori education to which a Maori was co-opted. One of the tasks of each sub-committee was to encourage Maori parents to become members of school committees. However, greater success in stimulating the interest of Maori parents in their children's schooling was achieved through the setting up of pre-school groups, particularly play centres in remoter areas, with the assistance of the Maori Education Foundation.

Among long-term plans, the Commission supported financial help by the State for research on the social, linguistic and teaching sides of Maori education. This recommendation influenced the approval by the

Minister of Education in 1971 of a scheme submitted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research for setting up a special research unit on Maori schooling, of which Dr R. A. Benton has been appointed Director. The Council has in mind a specified research programme over the next five years. Among the first tasks of the unit are the preparation of a linguistic map showing the languages (Maori and/or English) used by Maori children of different ages in various parts of the North Island and the preparation of language tests which will enable teachers to assess systematically the language background of new pupils.

Language is close to the heart of a culture, and the Commission advocated the study of Maori in senior primary classes as well as in secondary schools. During the 1960s, many groups, wishing to strengthen Maori culture, went further and urged that Maori be a compulsory subject in all primary schools. The result has been the introduction of Maori into the programmes of a growing number of secondary schools where it is taught either directly or from the Correspondence School, while links in teaching Maori have been established between primary schools and some secondary schools.* Students training for secondary teaching may take a course in the Maori language under the guidance of lecturers specially appointed. This year, Wellington Teachers' College offered a similar course for entrants to primary training and appointed a Maori language lecturer. The number of Maori cultural clubs has increased in recent years to 400 over the country as a whole, and one third of them are to be found in primary and secondary schools.

Among other recommendations made by the Commission was one supporting more residential trade courses for Maori apprentices from country districts. By 1971 there were seventeen separate courses in eleven trades, giving training to some 300 boys, and the scheme is being further extended.

The Commission saw the importance of the Advisory Committee on Maori Education as the body that could keep under review all measures and special provisions in Maori education and, by making surveys, decide whether or not their continuance was justified. In 1969 the Committee was reconstituted so that half its members are Maoris.

* See also *Education* 3, 1972, pp 2-4.

Fifth Area of Concern

Assessment of Pupils' Progress and Achievements

> *'If the system is to function efficiently, there is a special need to provide teachers and schools with the tests and measures that will assure them with certainty that their individual pupils are making satisfactory progress in the basic subjects.' (P. 260.)*

FROM THE BEGINNINGS of national education in New Zealand, evaluation of the educational achievements of pupils as a measure of their progress through the school system has been a major concern of both teachers and administrators. In 1936 the last of the external checks by examination on standards of work of primary pupils—the Proficiency examination — was abolished. Thereafter, intra-school evaluation broadened into surveys that took account both of children's scholastic achievements and of their social growth, the results of which were recorded cumulatively. Also, the use of various instruments to measure achievements and aptitudes increased. The self-contained school using a variety of evaluative techniques to build up a useful profile of each child gradually became the norm. This trend was parallelled by changes in the way children progress through the schools. In a typical class, the age-range became narrower as compared with the past while the range of abilities widened. Over the past thirty years, these changes and their implications have strongly influenced teaching methods and school organisation.

It has already been mentioned that disquiet in the minds of some parents about the quality of primary schooling during a time of serious shortages of qualified teachers was one of the reasons that led to the setting up of the Currie Commission. The Commission came to the conclusion that the amount of evidence supporting these doubts and

criticisms was not commensurate with the public discussion that had taken place in the 1950s, and, further, the Report stated that 'underlying primary teaching method there is now a body of educational theory that is firmly based and consistent'. The Commission considered, however, that there were often misunderstandings by parents and teachers about what the schools were trying to achieve, and the Report advocated better communication by the Department of Education with teachers and the community about the aims of primary education and the methods and techniques best suited to carry them out. The establishment of a public relations section in the Department was one of the outcomes of this general proposal and another was the publication by the Department of leaflets for parents dealing with such topics as the teaching of reading and the beginnings of mathematics.

Progressive achievement tests

But the Commission went further than the question of communication. It proposed that children's progress 'in reading comprehension, word knowledge, arithmetical concepts and processes, spelling, and English usage' be checked at certain points in their school course (namely, at the end of Standard 1, Standard 4, and Form 2) by means of specially devised achievement tests. Behind this was the Commission's desire to help teachers to discover the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils so that appropriate action could be taken. These recommendations stimulated much discussion on the place of testing and the means to be used. Although the Commission was at pains to explain 'that it had not in mind the mechanical application of examination barriers of the old standard type', many teachers felt that the checkpoint tests could regress into regular external examinations and, if administered nationally, could have a narrowing effect on the curriculum.

In 1963, a working-party of teachers, inspectors, and members of university and teachers' college staffs was organised so that the checkpoint proposals could be discussed in detail. It endorsed the increased use of standardised tests as part of the evaluative process, but suggested that the Commission's proposals be modified so as to make standardised tests available on an optional basis to all primary classes from Standard 1 upwards. An issue of *Education* (October, 1963) was devoted to a report of its discussions and findings which prepared the ground for the Progressive Achievement Tests prepared by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research in co-operation with the Department of

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Education of the handicapped (see page 43): a secondary school class for deaf children.

Education and teachers. Tests in reading comprehension and reading vocabulary were the first to be used, then tests in listening comprehension—and they are to be followed by tests of aspects of mathematics. Over ninety-five percent of primary schools use the tests and they are being increasingly used in Forms 3 and 4.

Besides recommending regular class testing, the Commission advocated the preparation and administration of national standardised tests at five-yearly intervals in basic subjects at certain points in the primary and secondary courses, so that national achievements could be compared periodically. The use by teachers of standardised tests based on New Zealand syllabuses obviated, or at least lessened, the need for national surveys. However, in the preparation of the Progressive Achievement Tests, a considerable amount of standardised material based on current syllabus items has become available for use on a national scale should this be required.

The Commission's desire to help teachers in gauging the progress of their pupils against national criteria has stimulated much interest in tests and their uses in the classroom and has been instrumental in producing standardised tests designed for New Zealand children.

School Certificate Examination

The Commission took a close look at the School Certificate Examination—the only existing national external check on pupils' achievements. Its fourteen recommendations for changes in the nature and organisation of this examination have had direct effects on it. The examination undoubtedly exercises a powerful influence on the work of the schools, and the Commission was concerned that core or general studies, not being examinable, tended in the fifth form to be neglected or reduced under the shadow of an examination for which a four-subject pass was the minimum.

One of the most significant results of the Commission's proposals was the introduction, in 1968, of the single-subject pass in the examination, a decision which made possible much-needed flexibility in school programmes. As a consequence, a pass in English was no longer essential for the award of a Certificate. A School Certificate Examination Board was set up to replace the School Certificate Review Committee, with, among other things, responsibilities for scaling to the standard of achievement in particular examination subjects. It includes representatives of the Department of Education, of teachers, and of the universities. Also, the Endorsed School Certificate disappeared and was replaced by a Sixth Form Certificate, for which pupils' work at the end of the sixth-form year is assessed internally on a five-point scale. In addition, several schools adopted the Commission's suggestion that they try out the use of a local Fourth Form Certificate of Achievement for pupils who leave from Form 4.

The Commission's recommendations have had a further effect. The pattern of examinations in secondary schools in Form 5 and upwards has come under review and is being debated in many quarters at the present time. Various alternatives are propounded, including internal assessment for the School Certificate, and important changes can reasonably be expected within the next few years.

Sixth Area of Concern

The Organisation of the School System

> *'There seems to be a general public and professional acceptance of the usefulness of a change from the primary school organisation at an average of* 11 *plus.' (P.* 176.*)*

In Chapter 5 of its report the Commission unfolded its plans for the future of secondary education in New Zealand, and in a series of recommendations suggested major changes in the existing school system. The fundamental change proposed was that secondary education for all children should begin at the average age of 11 plus, or in other words at Form 1. This proposal gained enthusiastic support, but it also aroused vigorous opposition.

The Commission found it far from easy to reconcile the principle of planning all secondary education from Form 1 with the sturdy practical difficulties inherent in a traditional eight-year pattern of primary education. Introduction of the principle in its pure form was plainly impracticable, and the Commission felt it was obliged to accept 'reasonable limits of cost and re-organisation'. Its recommendations reflect this view. If some ambivalence is to be found in the discussion of the nature of the change and how it was to be brought in, it probably arises from the real difficulty the Commission had in shaping means towards the desired end.

In supporting the beginning of secondary education for pupils at the age of 11 plus, the Commission was following precedents of over thirty years before. In 1930 the Atmore Committee had held the same view and made its recommendations accordingly. It was influenced both by the formative Hadow Report (1926) on the education of the

adolescent, which led to the demarcation between primary and secondary education in England being set at the age of 11 plus, and the junior high school movement in the U.S., which aggregated in one institution pupils corresponding to those in the two senior primary classes and the lowest secondary class in New Zealand. The Atmore Committee saw in the junior high school a means of bridging 'the great chasm' that lay between primary and secondary education; and this factor also influenced the Currie Commission in advocating that secondary education be extended downwards.

How to define 'secondary'

The Committee's plans for a general re-organisation of the school system have not been achieved. By 1962 the number of self-contained intermediate schools had grown to 59, while a small number of intermediate departments still existed. The future of these intermediates was one of the hard problems with which the Commission had to grapple. Another was the difficulty in the 1960s of defining secondary education. The Commission itself was not entirely clear on this point. It seems in the end to have accepted as a compromise the introduction at Form 1 of certain subjects traditionally regarded as 'secondary', such as science, foreign languages, mathematics. This can scarcely be regarded as secondary education, but it is only fair to add that the Commission also envisaged changes in staffing, appointments, inspection and facilities. Since the Report was published, mathematics as a school subject throughout the world has undergone a radical change affecting primer classes as well as Forms 6 and 7, and fundamental changes are at work in science. The basic problem is still, as it was seen to be in 1930, one of linkage between the programmes and work of primary and secondary classrooms, and of co-ordination of staffing and supervision.

The Commission's solution to the problem presented by the intermediate schools in any plans for re-organisation was that they should assume again their earlier designation of junior high schools. 'By this means,' stated the Report, 'it would be emphasised that pupils at this point are beginning their secondary education, and their teachers, who would be entitled to secondary grading, could be chosen with rather more emphasis than at present on specialist qualifications.' No move has been made to rename intermediates, but their Form 1 pupils now embark on 'secondary' subjects, staffing has been improved, and classes

are becoming smaller. Linkage between intermediate and secondary schools has been strengthened by curriculum changes over the Form 1 to Form 4 area. Meanwhile the number of intermediates has grown to a total of 105.

Secondary education in rural areas

The Commission's recommendations for earlier secondary education in country schools met with greater success. The possibility of gathering Form 1 and 2 pupils from surrounding country schools into existing district high schools and transforming the new institution into a secondary school was being examined by the Department when the Commission met; and two such schools—one at Geraldine and the other at Te Karaka—were being planned. The Commission endorsed the experiment, seeing these institutions in part as rural counterparts of the urban intermediates. It also advocated that the smaller district high schools be converted to schools of the Form 1-7 pattern. Finally, it was suggested that a few experimental Form 1-7 co-educational schools be established in new housing areas in the cities. The idea of the Form 1-7 school caught on not only with the professionals, but also with parents and lay administrators; there are now 24 of them. Legally they are 'composite' schools. Experiments with the smaller district high schools tend towards making them area schools catering, as does the district high school, for pupils from the primer stage to Form 7, but consolidating upon itself, as in the larger Form 1-7 schools, Form 1 and 2 pupils from nearby country schools. Special staffing is to be provided for these schools, two of which have been established. Last year, the Government announced its policy for the re-organisation of rural education. Education boards are asked to take stock of the district high schools under their control and recommend to the Minister of Education whether they should be converted to Form 1-7 schools or area schools.

Pre-school education

Since 1947, when a consultative committee under the chairmanship of Professor C. L. Bailey reported on pre-school educational services, there has been considerable growth in pre-school education. In 1970, some 17,000 children were attending over 300 kindergartens and over 24,000 children were enrolled at play centres. Financial assistance from the Government and professional advice from the Department of Educa-

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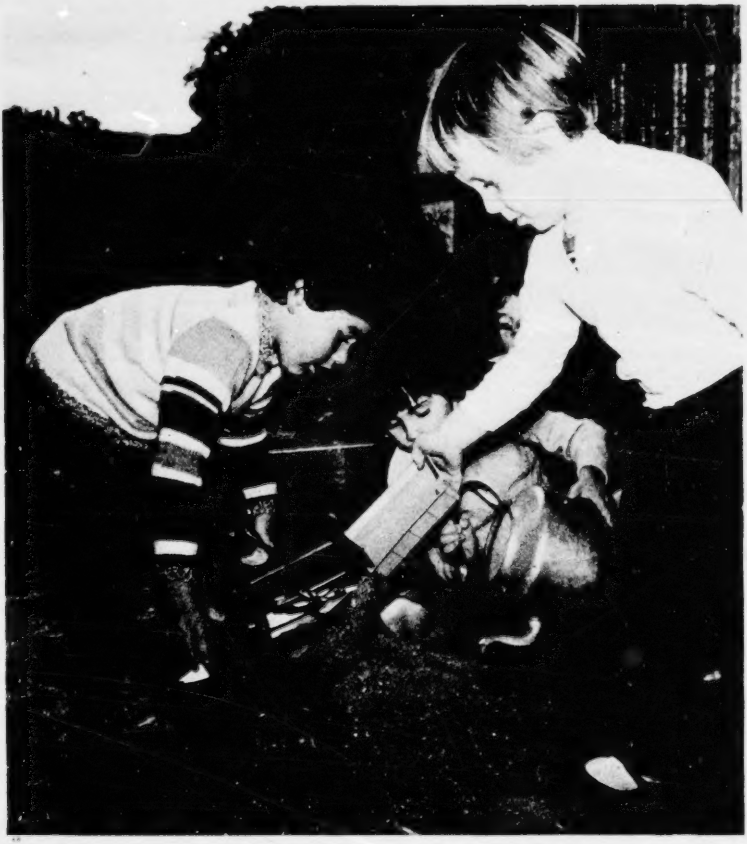

tion also increased over this period. The Campbell Committee, reporting in 1951 on the training of teachers, recommended that as long-term policy training for pre-school teaching should become the responsibility of the teachers' colleges rather than of separate institutions.

The Commission endorsed this recommendation. Complex administrative problems were involved and, in 1969, the Government set up an ad hoc committee with Professor C. Hill as chairman to enquire into

pre-school education and propose future developments. The Committee's report, issued towards the end of 1971, will be the basis for further planning. Among other things, the Committee seeks improvement and extension of pre-school services, the setting up of a National Advisory Council, and the training of pre-school teachers within the primary teachers' colleges.

The limits of compulsory education

From 1877 until 1964, the age of compulsory entry to primary school was 7 years. By the 1960s, well over ninety-five percent of children were being enrolled at the permissible age of 5 years.*

In 1944 the school-leaving age was raised from 14 years to 15 years. Thereafter, the number of 15-year-olds staying on at school rose steadily. In 1945, 57 percent of children between 15 and 16 years of age were at school; by 1962, the percentage had risen to 77. These figures influenced the Commission in coming to decisions about the upper limits of compulsory education. There were other considerations: In England, the Crowther Committee in 1959 had recommended that the leaving age be raised to 16 years. The Commission was aware that the issue was contentious. It argued the case for a higher leaving age and came down on the side of recommending that it be raised to 16 years, but not immediately. The age should be raised when the 1963 entrants to primary school reached the age of 16 years, that is, in 1973 'or such other time as the Government of New Zealand may see fit to adopt in view of the needs and circumstances of the country'. That no action has been taken on this recommendation can be attributed as much to the 'stay-on' factor as to opposition within the community. Eighty-five per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 16 years were at secondary school in 1970. Of the secondary school population as a whole, half the pupils in 1971 were over fifteen and therefore under no legal compulsion to attend school.

The Commission made two other less comprehensive proposals to change the existing law on the school-leaving age. The first arose from the embarrassment caused to schools by pupils being able to leave school on their fifteenth birthday. 'The effect upon the working spirit

* Although the Commission made no proposal to change the legal entry age, discussion on the Education Bill introduced in 1964 led to a change in the 1964 Act to the age of 6 years as the lower limit of compulsory education.

of a class', noted the Report, 'and even upon its discipline, particularly in classes where the pupils look upon themselves as "fifteen-year-old leavers" is obviously deplorable'. The Commission's modest proposal, that pupils be obliged to remain at school until the end of the school term during which they reach the age of 15, met opposition and was not pursued. The other recommendation was aimed at releasing genuine 'reluctant learners' who were over 14 years of age and had completed a course in Form 2 from the obligation to attend school. This recommendation inspired a change in the 1964 Education Act by which the Director-General could exempt a pupil from attendance at school after reviewing his scholastic progress, his conduct, and the benefit he might gain from further schooling. Should the Director-General consider it desirable, he might pass on to the Superintendent of Child Welfare the name and address of the pupil exempted.

Size of secondary schools

By the early 1960s, the growth of the secondary-school population had necessitated a review of the planned size of secondary schools, and the 'Nelson' plan for a school of 850 pupils (an increase of 250 on the previous standard plan) was introduced. The Commission considered that the logic of events pointed to a maximum size of about 1,200, but believed that the Department would be wise to experiment in the larger cities, especially in new housing areas, with schools enrolling even more than this, in order to ascertain whether or not very large schools might be successfully established in New Zealand. From discussions of these suggestions came the S.68 design planned basically for about 1,200 pupils but capable, where necessary, of growth in stages towards an enrolment of up to 2,000. The new design permits flexibility in school organisation; the idea of 'schools within a school' can be adopted.

Seventh Area of Concern

Religious Teaching in the State Schools

> *'On the question of teaching* about *religion, there is a good measure of agreement. When, however, the Commission turned to the questions raised by instruction* in *religion and by religious observances in schools, it found no such unanimity.' (P.* 676.)

SINCE 1877, the so-called 'secular clause' has remained undisturbed in the Education Act through the two major revisions of 1914 and 1964 and despite many attempts to have the Act amended to permit Bible readings as part of school programmes. The Currie Commission reaffirmed the secular principle, and signified that the principle meant that the official syllabus should contain nothing that could be construed as instruction in the tenets of any religion or sect. It also stated that it found 'no hindrance to teaching *about* religion in the present wording of the Act'.

The main problem was the legal status of the well-known 'Nelson system' introduced in Nelson at the turn of the century as a means of giving children in state primary schools regular religious teaching without breaking the secular intention of the Act. At the time the Commission met, it was claimed by the New Zealand Council for Christian Education that 80 percent of schools were using the Nelson system. What made it viable was the provision in the Act that each primary school was to be open on 5 days a week for a minimum of 4 hours a day, 2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon, both periods to be consecutive. The education boards, in organising the 5-hour school day, directed that schools be open for three hours in the morning. Thus school committees, which legally controlled the use of school buildings out of school hours, could obtain the education board's permission to delay the official opening of school for 30 minutes on one day a week and use that period for religious teaching by ministers of religion and voluntary instructors.

The legality of these proceedings was challenged more than once by secularists, but was never tested in the courts. By the 1960s the Nelson system was being criticised for other reasons. Often for convenience the weekly 30 minutes of religious teaching was taken at times other than during the first hour of the day, and sometimes in the afternoon, and for this there was no shadow of legal justification.

The Commission came to the view that the provisions for religious teaching should be on a proper legal footing in relation to the Education Act and recommended that the Act be amended so that at the request of a school committee, a whole school, or groups of classes, or a single class could be 'closed' (that is, placed out of session) at any time of the school day for not more than 30 minutes a class each week for religious teaching or for religious observances. It was specified that children could not be withdrawn from classes for religious teaching when they were doing ordinary school work, that no primary teacher should be permitted to take religious teaching at school during the school week, and that parents who so desired could withdraw their children from religious teaching.

The basic principle in these recommendations was readily agreed to by the Government, and late in 1962 the Religious Instruction and Observances in Public Schools Act was passed. In 1964 it was incorporated into the revised Education Act.

However, some changes were made in what the Commission had recommended. A school committee in using its powers under the Act to approve religious teaching was required to consult the head teacher before any decision was made, so that the organisation of school work would not be unduly disturbed. Teachers were permitted, if they wished, to offer their services as voluntary instructors, but it was specified that no pressure should be brought to bear on any teacher to take part in religious teaching 'and the fact that he did not participate could not prejudice his rights to appointment to a teaching position'. Parents, as in the past, could withdraw their children from religious teaching if they saw fit, rather than be required as the Commission recommended to 'contract in' at the time a child was enrolled at school.

A further recommendation asked that secondary schools be encouraged to include objective discussion of comparative religion in their programmes of senior studies. Many schools now do this as part of a liberal studies or general studies programme.

Eighth Area of Concern

State Aid to Private Schools

> *'. . . the Commission feels constrained to state from the beginning that the ultimate resolution of this problem, which brings up basic questions of the relationship between the State and the churches and between the individual and society, is to be found rather within the realms of politics and of community attitude and belief than of pure logic or educational theory.' (P. 698.)*

HAVING STATED this qualification, the Commission carefully examined the evidence for and against increasing the measure of financial assistance given by the Government to schools outside the state school system, and summed up its findings in three recommendations.

The question was not a new one. The 1877 Act, as well as providing for the secularity of the public schools, laid down the principle of central financing of the state education system. Thereafter, for some seventy years repeated requests from private school authorities, particularly the Catholic Church, for direct financial help were denied. But, from the 1940s onwards, various forms of assistance to teachers and pupils in private schools were instituted, for example, subsidies on teaching aids and equipment, boarding allowances for pupils, free textbooks, and the sharing of facilities and services. For the financial year 1959-60, such items as could be costed were estimated to have totalled close on £273,000. In the Commission's view this kind of aid had been applied 'quite generously'. It suggested two extensions: the first was an amendment to the rules governing the transport of private school pupils, so that, where an established transport service existed, pupils could if necessary be carried past the nearest state school. This suggestion has not been acted on, apart from some exceptional cases, mainly owing to objections raised by the education boards who are responsible

for school transport services. The second encouraged the building of more manual-training centres so that facilities and tuition would be available for all pupils of Forms 1 and 2, whether they are enrolled at public or private schools. This recommendation was agreed to and has become effective.

In support of the central question, the Commission heard a full statement represented by the Catholic Education Council for New Zealand. Requests for the giving of indirect aid through extension of subsidies and through remission of taxation for expenses of children's private schooling or for gifts and endowments to schools were also submitted by controlling authorities of some schools. Pleas that no further financial assistance be given from public funds were made by many bodies, most of them within the education community. The Commission drew, as well, on the experience of other countries, and in addition examined 'the basic ideas and historical reasons which have given rise to the public attitude in New Zealand, as it finds itself expressed in educational legislation'. Its conclusion was that it could not recommend a change in public policy on state aid to private schools.

In spite of the conclusion reached by the Commission, the measure of aid given to private schools, both primary and secondary, has been extended since 1962. They now receive free the full range of equipment, furniture, and teaching aids supplied to public schools as well as the equivalent of the official incidental grants, and can also qualify for subsidies on swimming pools. In 1970, assistance towards the salaries of teachers was approved by the Government in the form of a per capita grant based on the figure obtained by dividing total salaries in the state service by the total state school roll. Twenty percent of the per capita figure thus obtained is paid to private school authorities on the basis of their rolls, for use only towards teachers' salaries subject to certain provisos concerning the pupil-teacher ratio of recipient schools, the average salaries already paid, and the qualifications of the teachers. Over a period of seven years this per capita assistance will rise by 15 percent. It is also possible for private schools to obtain loans from the State Advances Corporation for building new schools or large additions, provided the Minister of Education approves each project.

Some Other Significant Recommendations

'The aims and needs of a particular society change from time to time and the schools reflect this change. However, the aims and needs of a society are seldom explicitly stated; instead they are interpreted and expounded by sectional groups, more or less well informed, by experts, by enthusiasts, by interested parties, by all the myriad voices of a democratic society . . . it is sometimes difficult for those responsible for decisions to determine what the general will of society really is.' (Pp. 17-18.)

Curriculum development

The Commission's recommendations under this head recognised the complexities of curriculum revision and sought to quicken the pace of curriculum change. The major recommendation was for the appointment of a permanent group of officers within the Department of Education 'to organise the preparation, co-ordination, and revision of curricula and syllabuses from the infant department to Form 6'. This proposal was accepted, and in 1963 a Curriculum Development Unit was created as part of the Department. It now consists of a group of officers headed by a Superintendent of Curriculum Development. When large-scale curriculum change is under way, the Unit organises representative revision committees, sets up pilot schemes to test new courses in the classroom, keeps abreast of relevant changes overseas and, when new syllabuses have been promulgated, prepares guides, handbooks, and resource material. A change of this kind was necessary in order that the Department of Education could meet its responsibilities for curriculum revision and renewal.

The Commission also made proposals for the revision of certain syllabuses, those in social studies, mathematics, science and foreign languages. In doing so, it had two purposes in view. The first was to up-date the subject matter and approaches in line with changes over-

seas. Secondly, the Commission saw in the curriculum a means of articulating the programmes of senior primary and junior secondary classes. It thus gave some weight in its recommendations to curriculum revision in the Form 1-4 tier of the school system. Since 1962, major revisions have been made in mathematics and science for both primary and secondary pupils, and a revision of the social studies syllabus is currently in hand, while co-ordination between primary and secondary schools in the teaching of foreign languages has greatly increased.

Other features of school work

Chapter 6 of the Report, entitled 'The Work of the Schools', dealt more fully with the inner life of the schools than either of the earlier surveys of the system. From a general study of what the Commission defined as the 'more professional aspects of education' came 63 recommendations. Some have already been mentioned and discussed—those on checkpoints, for example, on curriculum development, on examinations, and on smaller classes.

Some others however may be noted. A recommendation that schools give serious thought to the banning of corporal punishment in infant classes and in fifth and sixth forms had a mixed reception from both teachers and laymen. An attempt by the Department in 1963 to have the spirit of the recommendation endorsed by the Government was unsuccessful. Later, a petition supporting the recommendation came before the Petitions Committee of Parliament, but no legislative changes followed. Some hold the opinion that decisions about the banning of corporal punishment are professional decisions and thus rest with individual schools. The education boards in joint by-laws limit the use of corporal punishment and regard frequent resort to it as an indication of 'defective discipline'.

All nine recommendations about school libraries led to positive action. Six of them were fully accepted. In 1964 an officer with special oversight of school library development was appointed to the Curriculum Development Unit. Secondary school libraries were enlarged from 1968, and in 1970 a policy decision announced by the Minister of Education provided, from 1972, for libraries in the larger primary schools, as the Commission had recommended. The possibility of a Certificate in School Librarianship was raised by a working party set up by the Minister of Education in its report *Education for Librarianship*. A recommendation that high priority be given to experimental

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Adaptability to change—in roll numbers, in patterns of organisation, and in methods of teaching—is the keynote of the S.68 design for secondary schools.

projects on the use of television in schools, and the discussions that it initiated, led to the setting up of an ad hoc Committee of Enquiry to report on the introduction of educational television into New Zealand. Programmed learning in various forms was encouraged and some pilot schemes were set up in the use of language laboratories. With the support of the Commission, remedial work in secondary schools and special programmes for slow learners increased in scale.

Technical education

In its comments and findings (in the form of 16 recommendations) on technical education the Commission endorsed the general lines of planning, evident since the Second World War, towards the establishment of polytechnics or technical institutes in the larger urban centres as tertiary institutions, separate from secondary schools. There are now seven regional polytechnics as well as two central institutes (a technical correspondence institute and an institute that runs national courses). A first move towards establishing technical institutes in suitable smaller centres was taken in 1971 when approval was given by the Government for a modified institute at Palmerston North. Among outstanding issues is the training of technical tutors, particularly those recruited from industry. The Commission advocated a special course at a teachers' college for these tutors, but no decision has yet been made on this proposal.

Rural and agricultural education

It is probable that the Commission's support of the two experimental Form 1-7 schools, the subsequent expansion in the number of these schools, and the recent announcement by the Minister of Education of a policy for the general re-organisation of rural schools from Form 1 upwards have done more than anything else to assist country children. In the chapter of the Report on rural and agricultural education the recommendations were aimed chiefly at expanding existing services, such as the rural advisers, resident Correspondence School teachers, school conveyance, boarding allowances, hostels, and secondary school bursaries. All these services have since been extended or increased. The major recommendation on agricultural education proposed a closer relationship between the technical institutes and the two farm institutes already established. Plans for this are being worked out.

Education of the handicapped

The Commission reported with approval on the range of special education services available in New Zealand, and its nine recommendations supported extensions in staffing, in after-care for backward children, in in-service training, and in maintaining contacts with advanced overseas developments in special education. Of the nine recommendations, eight have come into effect either in full or in a modified form.

Educational finance

As educational finance is part of the structure of general governmental finance, the Commission made no recommendations for extensive changes. It asked for increased financial delegation to the Director-General of Education for educational buildings, and for the preparation of basic lists of equipment which would include some items—pianos, sewing machines, film-strip projectors, floor polishers, etc.—which were previously provided by means of subsidy. Most of the recommendations have been adopted.

The Commission could not fail to be aware that its proposals taken as a whole would greatly increase the cost of education, but, as mentioned earlier, it made no detailed estimate of the total cost of its proposals. On page 143 of the Report there appears a list of the twelve chief items in the Commission's recommendations involving increased expenditure. The Report goes on to say:

It [the Commission] believes that as far as rough estimates can take

it, the fulfilment of all these measures, many of which call for continuing expenditure, together with the increase due to natural growth, will gradually build up the expenditure on education over the next ten years to a figure not far short of an increase representing 1 per cent of the gross national product.

In point of fact, the proportion of the gross national product devoted to education increased from 3.3 percent in 1961 to 4.9 percent in 1971. Admittedly part of this increase arose from the heavy building programmes approved for the universities.

Research in education

From its enquiries, the Commission was impressed 'by the intimate relationship that exists between the vigour of research, and the vitality of the school system'. Its analysis of educational research needs in New Zealand and its proposals for intensification of research centred on two of the groups involved in educational research, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and the Department of Education. The third group, the six universities, was outside the scope of its enquiries.

The Commission made a strong case for the strengthening and re-organising of the Department of Education's research section. This was done, and in 1970 an Educational Research and Planning unit was formally established. Like the setting up of the Curriculum Development Unit, this was an important re-organisation within the Department. The Unit has already revised university roll projections for the period 1969-80, has assessed the effects of declining birth rates (1961-68) on primary and secondary enrolments, and has revised both primary and secondary roll projections (1969-80). In addition, it services the Advisory Council for Educational Planning, one of the sector committees of the National Development Council.

The work of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research expanded as it embarked on the preparation of standardised tests for school use at the request of the Department of Education. As mentioned earlier, a further expansion began when the Government agreed to give the Council financial support to conduct research into the educational problems of Maori pupils.

School buildings and the community

Of the nineteen recommendations in this part of the Report the

majority advocated extensions or revisions of procedures and devices already established, and in most cases the proposals were translated into action. In addition, however, the Commission's proposals for greater use by the community of school buildings led to some changes. One was the provision of halls at schools in new housing areas to be shared between the school and the community. This is in contrast to the typical primary-school hall which is financed by substantial local contributions. Thirteen such community halls have been built. The use of each is controlled by a committee on which the school committee and local people are represented.

Delinquency and the schools

Among the Commission's terms of reference was one that asked it to inquire into child welfare and delinquency 'so far as they have a bearing on the education system'. Concerned mainly with the role of the schools, the Commission came to the conclusion that where the home has failed 'and where families find no other support within the activities of the community, the schools would appear to be the main hope for many children moving with insecure steps to and through adolescence; and even where the community is active, the school cannot stand aside altogether'. This being so, it argued, the school has much need of the help of the supporting services. Paramount among these was the Child Welfare Division—long administered by the Department of Education, but now absorbed into a newly-formed Department of Social Welfare. Although much of the work of child welfare officers lies outside the school system, the help they can give teachers with difficult children is considerable.

Other supporting services—the psychological service and the visiting-teacher service—were enlarged with the Commission's support. So too was a new service, guidance counselling for secondary schools. In fact, the number of these counsellors has steadily increased until there are now 65 of them in secondary schools. In 1971 a working party set up by the Director of Secondary Education was asked to consider the continuing role of careers advisers in schools that have a guidance counsellor. Its report *Guidance in Secondary Schools* has been under discussion in the schools for some months and is now being studied in the Department of Education.

Some Conclusions

> *'At some points it is comparatively easy to see the way in which the system of education is likely to develop and to make appropriate plans to meet the coming needs. In others it is not possible to foresee all the effects that may follow when changes are initiated, and recommendations that may appear minor at present . . . may in the long run be found to be the most far-reaching.' (P. 8.)*

FROM A STUDY of the record, it is plain that the recommendations in the Currie Report have been generating changes on a broad front throughout the ten years since 1962. Largely this is because the Commission recognised, supported, and encouraged the main trends and tendencies in the growth of the system, and this explains why a great many of the changes initiated by the Commission were expansions of existing services. Other recommendations were of course more extensive and far-reaching. Some of them were in the offing when the Commission was set up, and they received a strong endorsement.

A second reason for the continuing action on the Commission's recommendations is that, since the first flurry of change after 1962, they have been regularly reviewed by officers of the Department of Education. The result is that the number of recommendations approved and brought into effect has steadily increased. The latest summary is as follows:

Recommendations fully implemented	134
Recommendations implemented in modified form	63
Recommendations implemented in part	40
Recommendations under action or being considered	52
Recommendations that have failed to gain support	39
Total	328

It has to be understood that the question of priorities has had its effect on the timing of the approval by the Government of some of the more important recommendations. Thus the Commission's proposals for smaller classes were by general agreement held in abeyance until the adjustments to teacher training had been made.

Among the recommendations that have not gained general support are those aimed at altering the administrative pattern of the education system. The original three-tier administration of primary education and the two-tier administration of secondary education in New Zealand have proved extremely durable, as was demonstrated by the aftermaths of both the Cohen Commission and the Atmore Committee. It is most unlikely that the Currie Commission's proposals will lead to any modifications of the present structure, and one of the Commission's main objectives in putting forward its new plan for district administration—better co-ordination between primary and secondary education—will have to be achieved in other ways. So too, it seems, will the recommendation that secondary education for all pupils in New Zealand begin at Form 1, particularly as there are large-scale administrative changes implied. This recommendation has been partially effected in rural areas by the spread of Form 1-7 schools, but elsewhere it is being realised through curriculum change, ad hoc in-service courses, and closer relationships between individual primary and secondary schools.

Some recommendations—the transfer of Maori schools to the education boards is an example—were implemented more speedily than the Commission had estimated. Others were modified in action in ways the Commission could not have foreseen, such as the extended use of standardised tests as an alternative to 'checkpoint' tests. Others again, once implemented, were affected by changes from other sources. The Research and Planning Unit, set up in the Department of Education, for example, when asked to service the Advisory Council on Educational Planning, was drawn into the wider sphere of indicative planning.

The Commission on Education in New Zealand takes its place in educational history alongside the Education Commission of 1912 and the Parliamentary Recess Committee of 1930, and its Report, besides arguing for change, is a valuable summary of the leading tendencies in New Zealand education in the early 1960s and their relevant background. Neither of the previous enquiries had the time to look so closely at the workings of the system and at the direction in which it

was moving, and thus neither of them was able to make so many detailed suggestions for improvement. Furthermore, neither of the previous enquiries looked so closely into, and assessed so fully, the work of schools and classrooms. On the whole, the Currie Commission endeavoured to build on to the living and growing system. It wisely avoided laying out a blueprint for the next half century, with all the difficulties, shortcomings, and imponderables that such a task involves. It planned very largely from what existed, and this has given strength to its findings. Most of its recommendations have led to action and change, and some of them have been absorbed into the new machinery of educational planning.

In 1962, the Commission set its priorities, which have been a guide to action over the past ten years. It is time to examine the priorities again. The studies to be initated by the Educational Priorities Conference later this year will undoubtedly define new directions for future planning.

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Don Campbell: inside front cover.
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